



County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING
STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

APPLICANT: Fresno County Design Division

APPLICATION NO.: Initial Study Application No. 6759

DESCRIPTION: Replace the functionally obsolete Travers Creek Bridge on Parlier Avenue with a new structure that meets current standards. The existing two-lane concrete slab bridge is twenty-eight feet in length with an approximate twenty-one foot curb to curb width and carries two nine-foot wide travel lanes and two-foot wide shoulders. The proposed box culvert is fifty-two feet in length with an approximate forty-nine foot curb to curb width that would carry two twelve-foot wide travel lanes and five-foot wide shoulders. The existing bridge is functionally obsolete and should be replaced due to its age and hydraulic insufficiencies. The approaches would not be widened but could be improved up to approximately 200 feet on either side of the bridge.

LOCATION: Parlier Avenue right-of-way at Travers Creek, approximately 0.2 miles east of Englehart Avenue, and approximately 1.1 miles northeast of the nearest limits of the City of Reedley. (SUP. DIST. 4).

I. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

- A. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista; or
- B. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway; or
- C. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or

D. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Parlier Avenue has not been designated as a scenic drive and there are no designated scenic vistas near this bridge. The proposed replacement bridge will serve the same purpose as the existing bridge with no increase in the number of travel lanes, despite the increase to the width of the bridge. The existing bridge and the replacement bridge serve as an essential part of the roadway system in this area.

Up to eight trees will be removed as part of this project; however their removal will not create an adverse impact on a scenic vista or substantially degrade the character of the site from public viewpoints. Travers Creek is lined with trees in the vicinity of the project site and throughout its length in this area of the County. There are existing trees immediately adjacent to those that are proposed to be removed. The bridge currently presents a break in the tree line along the length of the creek and the removal of these trees will widen that break to accommodate the increased width of the replacement bridge. The existing visual of the tree-lined creek with a bridge crossing will not be impacted.

II. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

A. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

This project will not convert prime or unique farmlands or farmland of statewide importance to a non-agricultural use. The area of potential effects (APE) establishes the anticipated extent of the project's impacts: it includes the existing bridge, portions of the canal north and south of the bridge, approximately 25 feet north and south of Parlier Avenue, and approximately 400 feet east and west of Travers Creek. The Fresno County Important Farmlands map shows that land in this area is considered to be a mixture of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. However, the important farmlands consideration does not take into account the existing use of the

project site, which is public right-of-way. Review of Aerial photos shows that crops in this area are not typically planted up to the property lines along Parlier Avenue. Only one parcel within the APE has done so and the potential impacts include the removal of approximately 7 existing orchard trees due to the ten additional feet of right-of-way which may be acquired on both sides of Parlier Avenue. If right-of-way acquisition is necessary, this one row of crops may need to be removed. However, the impacted parcel is not restricted by a Williamson Act Contract and approximately 23 acres are dedicated to farming. Therefore, the potential removal of one row of crops is not a significant impact to the conversion of prime or unique farmlands.

- B. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract; or
- C. Conflict with existing zoning for forest land, timberland or timberland zoned Timberland Production; or
- D. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
- E. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This project will not convert prime or unique farmlands or farmland of statewide importance to a non-agricultural use through indirect impacts. The area of potential effects (APE) establishes the anticipated extent of the project's impacts. Following construction, the proposed bridge will serve the same purpose as the existing bridge and will therefore not impact surrounding development. The use of this site as a bridge is consistent with the County Ordinance relating to Exclusive Agricultural districts and there is no forestland or land zoned for Timberland Production in the vicinity of the proposed bridge replacement.

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

- A. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Plan; or
- B. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard; or
- C. Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under a Federal or State ambient air quality standard; or

- D. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or
- E. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Construction has the potential for short-term effects on the local area; however, the project will not change the alignment or increase the number of through lanes, and therefore, would not increase the level of criteria pollutants in the area. The project will not increase capacity, or cause or contribute to any new localized Carbon Monoxide (CO) or Particulate Matter (PM)-10 violations or increase the frequency or severity of Fresno's existing CO or PM-10 non-attainment status. The project specifications and existing regulations would require actions during construction to reduce particulate matter in accordance with the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District's Regulation VIII, reducing the impact of construction to less than significant through the use of Best Management Practices, dust palliatives, and the use of up-to-date (most efficient) fleet equipment. The replacement bridge will not release any objectionable odors during operation.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; or
- B. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

There are three distinct environments within the project's APE: disturbed/developed habitat, agricultural habitat, and riparian habitat. A Biological Compliance memo was prepared by the Southern San Joaquin Valley Environmental Management Branch on January 15, 2014. That memo concluded that the lack of natural habitat at the project site would generally preclude the presence of special-status species. Some of the vegetation found within the vicinity of the existing project area consists of weedy non-native species that provide little or no biological importance and value. There is also riparian habitat within the project area that serves as biological importance for species associated with that habitat. The Area of Potential Effects (APE) includes the existing bridge, portions of the canal north and south of the bridge, approximately 25 feet north and south of Parlier Avenue, and approximately 400 feet east and west of Travers Creek.

However, the study further noted that nesting swallows and raptors may use the bridge during nesting season. Therefore, mitigation is required to avoid impacts to nesting bird species:

* **Mitigation Measures**

The following Mitigation Measures shall be implemented to address impacts to Migratory Birds:

- a. *If project activities occur outside of the nesting season, no further mitigation is required. The nesting season is February 15-August 31.*
- b. *If project activities must occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys for active raptor, swallow, and migratory bird nests within 30 days of the onset of these activities. The survey area will include all of the APE and a 250-foot buffer of the APE. If no active nests are found, no further mitigation is required.*
- c. *Should any active nests be discovered within the survey area, the biologist will determine the appropriate construction setback distances based on the applicable California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) guidelines and/or the biology of the affected species. Construction-free buffers will be identified on the ground with flagging fencing, or by other easily-visible means, and will be maintained until the biologist has determined that the young have fledged.*
- d. *In order to avoid impacts to nesting cliff swallows, project activities that require direct impacts to nests, such as the bridge removal, shall occur outside of the nesting season. If removal is to occur during nesting season, suitable exclusionary devices shall be installed prior to February 15, when the bridge is vacant of nesting birds and before construction activities are to commence.*

C. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally-protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

It is anticipated that construction of the bridge will require the stripping of vegetation and earth moving/excavation. These types of activities have the potential to adversely impact Travers Creek, a federally-protected wetland. However, in order to obtain construction permits, this project will be required, through Fresno County Regulations, to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP will list the Best Management Practices that will be used to protect storm water runoff and will contain a visual monitoring program, a chemical monitoring program, and a sediment monitoring program, if required. Other Best Management Practices that may be associated with the SWPPP include limiting work in the creek to avoid the rainy season, coordination of the installation of erosion and sedimentation control devices with land-

disturbing activities, revegetation of construction areas, and limitations on the areas designated for vehicle parking, stockpiling, and staging. Further, any discharge into the waters would require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit. The need to prepare the SWPPP is required to obtain the 401 Permit and therefore is not required as mitigation. Compliance to the requirements of the 401 permitting process and the SWPPP will ensure that impacts to Travers Creek (wetlands) will be less than significant.

D. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Travers Creek has not been identified as a migratory corridor. During construction, a coffer dam may be installed to divert water away from the project site and will be removed once construction is complete. If damming the creek is necessary, water will be piped through the site to prevent build-up behind the dam.

The existing bridge is designed as a slab with two spans. The replacement bridge is a box culvert which will be placed on the bottom of the streambed and will create a tunnel through which the creek will flow. The bridge will be of sufficient width to avoid impacts due to the narrowing of the flow along the stream and following construction, water will flow over it unimpeded. Therefore, impacts to the movement of fish or wildlife species along Travers Creek will be less than significant.

E. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or

F. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state Habitat Conservation Plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This project is not subject to any local policies, ordinances, Habitat Conservation Plans, or Natural Community Conservation Plans.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

A. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or

B. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or

C. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

A Historic Property Survey Report was prepared by LSA to determine potential impacts from the project on cultural and tribal resources. Two Areas of Potential Effects (APE) were established for this project: an Archaeological APE and an Architectural APE. The 2.0-acre archaeological APE is approximately 820 feet long by 70 to 160 feet wide and has been bounded to include the maximum extent of ground disturbance associated with the Project including the bridge design, staging areas, and permanent and temporary right of way.

The 77-acre architectural APE is located in a rural area generally comprising small farmsteads of fewer than 20 acres east of the city of Reedley in southeastern Fresno County near the Tulare County line. The APE is approximately 340 feet long and varies in width from 180 to 250 feet; it bounds the entirety of all parcels from which there is potential right-of-way acquisition, including Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN): 373-340-04; 373-340-10; 373-350-24; and 373-350-06. The Architectural APE includes properties that may be indirectly affected by the Project.

A field survey was conducted on March 6, 2014 of all accessible portions of the Architectural APE; this includes the extent of the right-of-way and those portions of private property which were visible from the right-of-way. No resources were identified.

A field review of the APE was conducted to determine if nearby buildings and properties had historical relevance. The field review identified single-family residences, outbuildings, fences, vegetation, and 10- to 20-acre parcels under cultivation or left fallow. The residential buildings are typical expressions of architectural styles that are common in early-to-mid-20th century residential buildings in rural Fresno County and California. Several residences have attached or detached garages and others were remodeled or refurbished over the last 30 years. Three farmstead properties, located at 21407 Parlier Avenue, 21485 Parlier Avenue, and 21502 Parlier Avenue, were identified in the APE. These properties are modest examples of Vernacular and Minimal Traditional residential buildings on small farmstead properties of fewer than 20 acres. The residential buildings are single family buildings on a square or rectangular-shaped plan. Typical alterations observed included replacement windows, main entrance doors, structural additions and filled-in porches. Several properties have newer detached mobile homes or outbuildings used for equipment and materials storage. These properties were determined not to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places due to a lack of significant historical associations. The *California Historic Bridge Inventory – Local Agency Bridges* lists Travers Creek Bridge as Category 5: "not eligible for listing the National Register of Historic Places".

LSA also reached out to the Native American Heritage Commission and the following tribal governments: Santa Rosa Tachi Rancheria, Sandy Rancheria of Mono Indians, Cold Springs Rancheria of Mono Indians, Dumna Wo-Wah, Choinumni Tribe, Table Mountain Rancheria, Dunlap Band of Mono Historical Preservation Society, Cold Springs Rancheria of Mono Indians, Choinumni Farm Tribe, Choinumni Tribe of Yokuts,

and Traditional Choinumni Tribe. Letters were sent to those tribes on February 25, 2014. Santa Rosa Tachi Rancheria responded to that letter and asked to view the site, but a visit was not arranged after staff indicated to the representative that the majority of the APE would not be accessible (private property). On March 27, 2014, LSA followed up with each of the remaining tribes by phone. They reached only Sandy Rancheria of Mono Indians and the representative indicated that she was not aware of any resources present at the project site.

County staff also reached out to four Native American tribes who had requested to be notified under the provisions of Assembly Bill 52. Notice that an Initial Study was to be prepared was sent to the following Tribal Governments who had previously requested such notification: Table Mountain Rancheria (TMR) on June 27, 2017, Santa Rosa Rancheria (SRR) on June 27, 2017, Dumna Wo Wah (DWW) on August 17, 2017, and Picayune Rancheria of Mono Indians (PRCI) on July 26, 2018.

The Tribal Governments responded as follows: TMR requested consultation on July 18, 2017; PRCI on August 18, 2017, and Dumna Wo Wah on September 7, 2017. A meeting was held on August 29, 2017 to discuss potential mitigation for this project. The provisions of AB 52 require the Tribes to identify cultural resources which are present on a project site and require the Lead Agency to include mitigation measures in order to avoid or substantially reduce adverse impacts to those resources. While no Tribal Cultural Resources were identified by any of the Tribes, they indicated that they often withhold information from the Sacred Lands Files in order to better protect resources.

While they did not identify a specific resource known to be present at this site, all three Tribes present at the meeting (TMR, SRR, and PRCI) indicated concerns that this area was sensitive to resources, specifically in regard to human remains. Since it cannot be known with certainty that cultural resources do not exist within the APE, adherence to the following mitigation measures will ensure that previously unknown resources are identified at the time of excavation and that appropriate steps are taken to protect them. Letters summarizing the consultation and listing the proposed mitigation measures were sent to the Tribes on October 9, 2018. None of the tribes responded within the deadline and consultation was concluded on November 8, 2018.

To ensure that impacts to resources which may be present but are currently unknown can be reduced to less than significant, the following mitigation measures will be required:

* **Mitigation Measures**

1. *The following mitigation measures shall be implemented to address potential impacts to Cultural Resources:*
 - a) *Forty-eight (48) hours prior to any ground-disturbing activities within the Area of Potential Effect (APE), such as digging, trenching, or grading, the Applicant shall notify all Tribes that participated in consultation of the opportunity to have a certified Native American Monitor present during those construction activities. Notification shall be by email to the following persons: Robert Pennell at*

rpennell@tmr.org; Robert Ledger at ledgerrobert@ymail.com; and Tara Estes-Harter at Tharter@chukchansi-nsn.gov. The tribal monitors shall be independently insured with policies conforming to County of Fresno requirements in order to enter the construction zone.

- b) A qualified archaeologist/paleontologist shall be on call during any ground-disturbing activity at the project site to evaluate any possible resources which are uncovered.*
- c) The qualified archaeologist/paleontologist shall conduct a preconstruction meeting to orient the construction crew to the potential for encountering prehistoric archaeological deposits during construction. This instructional meeting shall include a discussion of the types of artifacts that could be encountered and the steps to take upon discovery to avoid inadvertent impacts to such finds. The tribal monitors may be present at the preconstruction meeting.*
- d) In the event that cultural resources are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities, all work shall be halted in the area of the find. An Archeologist shall be called to evaluate the findings and make any necessary mitigation recommendations. If human remains are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities, no further disturbance is to occur until the Fresno County Sheriff-Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition. All normal evidence procedures should be followed by photos, reports, video, etc. If such remains are determined to be Native American, the Sheriff-Coroner must notify the Native American Commission within 24 hours.*

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

- A. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation; or
- B. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This project represents a necessary improvement to the County Circulation System. Compliance to Air District regulations requires the project to use modern construction equipment, which typically increase in efficiency from year to year. This bridge was determined to be structurally deficient and repairs must be made to ensure the safety of users; therefore, the proposed improvements do not present an unnecessary consumption of energy resources.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

- A. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
 - 1. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?
 - 2. Strong seismic ground shaking?
 - 3. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?
 - 4. Landslides?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

According to Figures 9-5 and 9-6 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not located in an area of landslide hazard, or in an area known to experience subsidence. The site is within the area where there is a 10% chance in 50 years that peak horizontal ground acceleration will exceed 20% of the acceleration of gravity during an earthquake event. This is the lowest level of risk shown on the map. Review of the most recent Alquist-Priolo Maps indicate that the project is not within an Earthquake Fault Zone.

- B. Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil; or
- C. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Grading and site preparation involved in the construction of the bridge would require the stripping of vegetation and earth movement/excavation, which will increase the potential for soil erosion. However, as discussed in Section IV.C, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is required by the General Construction Permit. The SWPPP includes Best Management Practices which must be incorporated into the project design and monitoring programs to ensure that visual pollutants, chemical pollutants, and sediments are not being released into Travers Creek. Therefore, with the existing regulation which requires the developer to prepare and adhere to the SWPPP, impacts to erosion or loss of topsoil, on-site or off-site landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, and collapse will be less than significant.

- D. Be located on expansive soil as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Soils at the project site consist of Greenfield sandy loam in the area of the creek, Atwater loamy sand west of the creek, and Atwater sandy loam east of the creek. Figure 7-1 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report shows that the project site is outside of areas known to have expansive soils and the site-specific soil composition does not indicate a local hazard due to high clay content. Loamy sand soils consist of approximately 20% clay content and sandy loam soils consist of approximately 10% clay content. Clay soils do not drain well and tend to absorb water, causing initial expansion and then shrinkage when the water dries up. Due to the low clay content in the vicinity of the bridge replacement, there are no site-specific concerns with expansive soils.

E. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No sanitary disposal systems are proposed as part of this project. Portable units will be provided for construction workers and no employees will be present during operation. The zoning ordinance does not require the installation of sanitary facilities for bridge projects.

F. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

The project site is not located in an areas known to be sensitive to paleontological finds; however, the site has not been surveyed for the presence of such resources. Mitigation Measures requiring the developer to retain an archeologist/paleontologist and requiring worker education to recognize paleontological resources will reduce impacts to potential resources to less than significant.

* **Mitigation Measures**

1. See Section V.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

- A. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment; or
- B. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Construction of the bridge will occur in compliance with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District standards. Following construction, there is no proposed increase in the number of through lanes or other factors that could increase traffic. Therefore, the operational emissions from vehicles passing over the bridge remains unchanged from the baseline. The bridge will not generate greenhouse gas emissions and will not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

- A. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials; or
- B. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment; or
- C. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school; or
- D. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment; or
- E. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area; or
- F. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or
- G. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Operation of this project will not create a significant hazard through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials because the use of such materials is not proposed during construction or operation. Surrounding properties are not located on a list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Further, a typical user of the project site will spend less than 15 seconds within the APE (approximately 828 feet at 40 mph within a vehicle). The replacement bridge is more likely to remain

operational in the event of a fire emergency, since it will be built to current safety standards.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

- A. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Development of this project is subject to the following requirements: Fresno County Ordinance Code, Chapter 153.28 Grading and Excavation, which requires compliance through plan approval to standards which control excavation, grading, and earthwork; the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) which is required as part of the Construction General Permit and requires the implementation of Best Management Practices to protect storm water runoff and monitoring programs to ensure that visible, non-visible, and chemical contaminants are not released; and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit which is required prior to discharge to Travers Creek.

The SWPPP is to be designed with Best Management Practices (BMPs) that the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) has deemed as effective at reducing erosion, controlling sediment, and managing runoff. These can include covering disturbed areas with mulch, temporary seeding, soil stabilizers, binders, fiber rolls or blankets, temporary vegetation, and permanent seeding. Sediment-control BMPs include installing silt fences or placing straw wattles below slopes, installing berms and other temporary run-on and runoff diversions.

Compliance to these existing regulations ensure that impacts to water quality standards and waste discharge requirements will be less than significant.

- B. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No water use is required for operation of this project following construction. During construction, water may be required for curing or dust/soil stabilization; however, this temporary usage will not substantially deplete groundwater supplies. There will be no substantial depletion of groundwater supplies or groundwater recharge.

- C. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site?

1. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;
2. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?
3. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or
4. Impede or redirect flood flows?

D. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The existing two-lane concrete slab bridge is twenty-eight feet in length with an approximate twenty-one foot curb-to-curb width and carries two nine-foot wide travel lanes and two-foot wide shoulders. The proposed box culvert is fifty-two feet in length with an approximate forty-nine foot curb-to-curb width that would carry two twelve-foot wide travel lanes and five-foot wide shoulder. This increase to the area of the bridge will not create run-off that would alter existing drainage patterns because compliance with the regulations listed in Section IX.A require Best Management Practices and grading review to ensure that such impacts do not occur. The project site is not located in an area at risk of tsunami (such as coastlines) or inundation due to seiche (proximate to large, still bodies of water such as lakes). Figure 9-8 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report indicates that the project site is not in an area subject to inundation due to dam failure.

E. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The limited increase in impermeable area of the bridge will not obstruct any water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Following construction, there is no water usage or discharge associated with this application.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

- A. Physically divide an established community; or
- B. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The intention of bridges is to form connections between places that are otherwise divided. In this case, Travers Creek forms a physical divide connected by the existing bridge. Following construction, the new bridge will serve the same purpose, but with a higher standard of safety. This project does not conflict with any land use plans, policies, or regulations and, as discussed in Section IV, is not subject to a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. Therefore, there will be no impacts to land use plans and/or policies intended to mitigate environmental effects.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state; or
- B. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local General Plan, Specific Plan or other land use plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

According to Figure 7-7 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not located in an area of known mineral resources. Further, this bridge replacement project would not result in the loss of the availability of known mineral resources.

XIII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

- A. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies; or
- B. Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels; or
- C. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

During construction, severe noise levels and ground borne vibrations may occur at the nearby residences. However, the Fresno County Noise Ordinance exempts construction noise when it occurs between six a.m. and nine p.m. on any day except Saturday or Sunday, and between seven a.m. and five p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Compliance

to this regulation will ensure that noise due to construction will not expose persons to severe noise levels, or ground-borne vibrations. Following construction, the bridge will serve the same purpose as the existing bridge with the same number of travel lanes. Therefore, there will be no increase in the ambient or periodic noises associated with an increase in traffic. Parlier Avenue will continue to operate at about 600 vehicles per day. The project site is not located in an area subject to excessive noise levels associated with an airport or an airstrip.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

- A. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?; or
- B. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Bridge replacement projects do not induce substantial population growth. No displacement of persons will occur and therefore, the need for additional housing will not occur as a result of this project.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

- A. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically-altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically-altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services?
 1. Fire protection;
 2. Police protection;
 3. Schools;
 4. Parks; or
 5. Other public facilities?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Replacement of this bridge will not cause adverse impacts to fire protection services, police protection services, schools, parks, or other public facilities. The replacement bridge will improve safety for such services if they are required to cross Travers Creek at Parlier Ave.

XVI. RECREATION

Would the project:

- A. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or
- B. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

During operation, the replacement bridge will not impact use of surrounding parks. The bridge will serve the same purpose as the existing bridge, but will be safer for users than the existing bridge, which is structurally obsolete. There is no increase to the number of through lanes.

XVI. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

- A. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities; or
- B. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?; or
- C. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?; or
- D. Result in inadequate emergency access?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

During construction, traffic along Parlier Avenue will be detoured around Travers Creek. Detours will likely be sent north to E. South Avenue or south to E. Manning Avenue, both of which are located one half-mile from E. Parlier Avenue. Parlier has an Average Daily Traffic of 600 vehicles, which can be accommodated by the detour roads. Following construction, the bridge will replace the existing bridge on Parlier and will serve an identical function. Therefore, the project will not conflict with a plan, ordinance,

or policy regarding the effectiveness of the circulation system, will not create adverse impacts on level of service, and will improve safety on Parlier Avenue by replacing a deteriorated bridge with one that meets current safety standards. Hazards at the bridge will be reduced because the larger shoulders will be safer for bikers and drivers.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
 1. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or
 2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

See discussion in Section V regarding the studies prepared for this area and required mitigation measures. Consultation with local Native American Tribes indicated that no known resources were present on the site, but that this area was particularly sensitive to discovery of unknown resources. Therefore, the Mitigation Measures identified in Section V must be implemented to reduce impacts to these potential resources.

* **Mitigation Measures**

See Section V.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

- A. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects; or
- B. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years; or

- C. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments; or
- D. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals; or
- E. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This project will not use any water following construction. It also will not require the treatment of wastewater or disposal of solid waste in a landfill. It will therefore, comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. During demolition of the existing bridge and construction of the replacement, solid waste will be sent to the American Avenue Landfill, which has sufficient capacity to accommodate the waste.

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

- A. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects; or
- B. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire; or
- C. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment; or
- D. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

According to the Cal Fire November 7, 2007 Fire Hazard Severity Zones in SRA, the project site is located in an unincorporated area of local responsibility and not at risk of adverse impacts due to fire or post-fire consequences.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:

- A. Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

This project is likely to have impacts on special-status species and therefore the mitigation measures identified in Section IV shall be implemented. While no existing cultural resources were identified within the Archeological Area of Potential Effects, local Tribal Governments have indicated that there is a high potential for currently unknown resources to be excavated during construction. Therefore, the mitigation measures identified in Section V shall be implemented. Compliance to these mitigation measures will reduce impacts to Biological, Cultural, and Tribal Resources to less than significant.

* **Mitigation Measures**

See Section V.

- B. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects); or
- C. Have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Impacts from this project are limited to the construction phase, when large vehicles will be moving to the site and construction workers may be operating heavy machinery. Following construction, the project will have no daily employees and will not contribute to any cumulative impacts. There is no increase relative to the baseline because there is no increase in the number of through lanes. No other adverse impacts to human beings (directly or indirectly) were identified.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Based upon Initial Study Application No. 6759, staff has concluded that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

It has been determined that there would be no impacts to Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire.

Potential impacts related to Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, and Transportation have been determined to be less than significant.

Potential impacts relating to Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Tribal Resources have determined to be less than significant with compliance with the proposed mitigation measures.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration/Negative Declaration is recommended and is subject to approval by the decision-making body. The Initial Study is available for review at 2220 Tulare Street, Suite A, street level, located on the southwest corner of Tulare and "M" Street, Fresno, California.

CMM

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File original and one copy with: Fresno County Clerk 2221 Kern Street Fresno, California 93721		Space Below For County Clerk Only.		
CLK-2046.00 E04-73 R00-00				
Agency File No: IS 6759		LOCAL AGENCY PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION		County Clerk File No: E-
Responsible Agency (Name): Fresno County	Address (Street and P.O. Box): 2220 Tulare St. Sixth Floor		City: Fresno	Zip Code: 93721
Agency Contact Person (Name and Title): Chrissy Monfette, Planner		Area Code: 559	Telephone Number: 600-4245	Extension: N/A
Project Applicant/Sponsor (Name): Fresno County Design Division		Project Title: Travers Creek Bridge Replacement		
<p>Project Description:</p> <p>Replace the functionally obsolete Travers Creek Bridge on Parlier Avenue with a new structure that meets current standards. The existing two-lane concrete slab bridge is twenty-eight feet in length with an approximate twenty-one foot curb to curb width and carries two nine-foot wide travel lanes and two-foot wide shoulders. The proposed box culvert is fifty-two feet in length with an approximate forty-nine foot curb to curb width that would carry two twelve-foot wide travel lanes and five-foot wide shoulders. The existing bridge is functionally obsolete and should be replaced due to its age and hydraulic insufficiencies. The approaches would not be widened but could be improved up to approximately 200 feet on either side of the bridge.</p>				
<p>Justification for Negative Declaration:</p> <p>It has been determined that there would be no impacts to Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire.</p> <p>Potential impacts related to Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, and Transportation/Traffic have been determined to be less than significant.</p> <p>Potential impacts relating to Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Tribal Resources have determined to be less than significant with compliance with the proposed mitigation measures.</p> <p>A Mitigated Negative Declaration/Negative Declaration is recommended and is subject to approval by the decision-making body. The Initial Study is available for review at 2220 Tulare Street, Suite A, street level, located on the southwest corner of Tulare and "M" Street, Fresno, California.</p>				
<p>FINDING:</p> <p>The proposed project will not have a significant impact on the environment.</p>				
Newspaper and Date of Publication: Fresno Business Journal – January 30, 2019		Review Date Deadline: Board of Supervisors – March 12, 2019		
Date: Marianne Mollring Senior Planner	Type or Print Signature: Marianne Mollring Senior Planner		Submitted by (Signature): Planner	

State 15083, 15085

County Clerk File No.: _____

**LOCAL AGENCY
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
Initial Study Application No. 6759
(Including Conditions of Approval and Project Notes)

Mitigation Measures					
Mitigation Measure No.*	Impact	Mitigation Measure Language	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Time Span
1.	Biological Resources	<p><i>The following Mitigation Measures shall be implemented to address impacts to Migratory Birds:</i></p> <p>a) <i>If project activities occur outside of the nesting season, no further mitigation is required. The nesting season is February 15-August 31.</i></p> <p>b) <i>If project activities must occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys for active raptor, swallow, and migratory bird nests within 30 days of the onset of these activities. The survey area will include all of the APE and a 250-foot buffer of the APE. If no active nests are found, no further mitigation is required.</i></p> <p>c) <i>Should any active nests be discovered within the survey area, the biologist will determine the appropriate construction setback distances based on the applicable California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) guidelines and/or the biology of the affected species. Construction-free buffers will be identified on the ground with flagging fencing, or by other easily-visible means, and will be maintained until the biologist has determined that the young have fledged.</i></p> <p>d) <i>In order to avoid impacts to nesting cliff swallows, project activities that require direct impacts to nests, such as the bridge removal, shall occur outside of the nesting season. If removal is to occur during nesting season, suitable exclusionary devices shall be installed prior to February 15, when the bridge is vacant of nesting birds and before construction activities are to commence.</i></p>	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	Annually, September 2 to February 14

Mitigation Measures					
Mitigation Measure No.*	Impact	Mitigation Measure Language	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Time Span
2.	Cultural Resources/Tribal Resources	<p><i>The following mitigation measures shall be implemented to address potential impacts to Cultural and Tribal Resources:</i></p> <p>a) <i>Forty-eight (48) hours prior to any ground-disturbing activities within the Area of Potential Effect (APE), such as digging, trenching, or grading, the Applicant shall notify all Tribes that participated in consultation of the opportunity to have a certified Native American Monitor present during those construction activities. Notification shall be by email to the following persons: Robert Pennell at rpennell@tmr.org; Robert Ledger at ledgerrobert@ymail.com; and Tara Estes-Harter at tharter@chukchansi-nsn.gov. The tribal monitors shall be independently insured with policies conforming to County of Fresno requirements in order to enter the construction zone.</i></p> <p>b) <i>A qualified archaeologist/paleontologist shall be on call during any ground-disturbing activity at the Proposed Project to evaluate any possible resources uncovered.</i></p> <p>c) <i>The qualified archaeologist/paleontologist shall conduct a preconstruction meeting to orient the construction crew to the potential for encountering prehistoric archaeological deposits during construction. This instructional meeting shall include a discussion of the types of artifacts that could be encountered and the steps to take upon discovery to avoid inadvertent impacts to such finds. The tribal monitors may be present at the preconstruction meeting.</i></p> <p>d) <i>In the event that cultural resources are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities, all work shall be halted in the area of the find. An Archeologist shall be called to evaluate the findings and make any necessary mitigation recommendations. If human</i></p>	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	48 hours prior to ground-disturbing activities and ongoing throughout construction

Mitigation Measures					
Mitigation Measure No.*	Impact	Mitigation Measure Language	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Time Span
		<i>remains are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities, no further disturbance is to occur until the Fresno County Sheriff-Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition. All normal evidence procedures should be followed by photos, reports, video, etc. If such remains are determined to be Native American, the Sheriff-Coroner must notify the Native American Commission within 24 hours.</i>			

*MITIGATION MEASURE – Measure specifically applied to the project to mitigate potential adverse environmental effects identified in the environmental document.

Notes	
The following Notes reference mandatory requirements of Fresno County or other Agencies and are provided as information to the project Applicant.	
1.	As for all projects proposing excavation or grading, the potential exists for unknown hazardous contamination to be encountered during the project construction. Therefore, the procedures outlined in Appendix E (Caltrans Unknown Hazards Procedures) shall be followed for any previously unknown hazardous waste/material encountered as part of construction of the proposed project.
2.	The project is anticipated to be eligible for a Nationwide Permit (NWP) 14 Linear Transportation Projects. A Pre-construction Notification is required only for projects over 0.1 acres under the NWP 14.
3.	The project requires a Section 401 Water Quality certification to be issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.
4.	The project requires a Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement to be issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.
5.	The Proposed Project requires a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit for Discharges of storm water associated with construction activities. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall also be developed and implemented as part of the Construction General Permit.